

**Testimony of
Barbara Culpepper from
Waterloo, Iowa
June 17, 1999**

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee for inviting me to testify before you today. My name is Barbara Culpepper and I am the administrative assistant to the Superintendent of Schools. I live in Waterloo, Iowa. I also serve on the Waterloo Human Rights commission and am President of the local chapter of International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP).

I became involved in the Money 2000 program in the winter of 1997, when Pat Gorman, a friend and field specialist with the Iowa Extension Agency, asked me to assist her in promoting the program. The promotion involved the two of us being filmed in my home by the local television station. The film was then aired on the 6:00 and 10:00 news in Waterloo. I officially joined the program early in 1998, but didn't begin to seriously save until around October, 1998.

I realized that my saving habits, or lack thereof, were causing me to fall short of one of my goals, which was traveling. And being an impulse buyer certainly didn't help the situation. Not only that, but I loved buying gifts and making gift baskets for my friends and co-workers -- which could sometimes be expensive. As I began to see my savings balance dwindle and my expenses rise, I realized I needed to do something drastic. Soon.

Joining the Money 2000 Program gave me the motivation I needed to get started on a money saving program -- even if it meant only saving a few dollars a week. I've always loved shopping, but I began to ask myself questions before making purchases, such as do I really need this item; would I purchase it if I had to come back tomorrow, and what will I have to give up in order to have it.

Currently, I participate in the Money 2000 program by saving \$100 monthly (through payroll deduction) and by subscribing to the quarterly newsletter. The newsletter provides timely, relevant information that I can access at my convenience. I have also received a wide range of materials relating to money management issues from the program office.

My future goals are to pay off my car and my credit card debt, buy a condo, do some traveling and, ultimately, have enough money set aside to ensure a comfortable lifestyle in my retirement years. Right now I plan to use the savings I accumulate from the Money 2000 program to help with a down payment on a condo. I'd like to retire in about 15 years. A few months ago I figured that, in 15 years, if I continued to rent an apartment, I will have paid out \$85,000. This is money that can, instead, be used to buy a condo, which will, in turn, become an investment. Additionally, I'll receive a tax break by being a homeowner.

I'm making progress toward my goals. I've paid off two of my credit card accounts and one of my loans. I'm on schedule to have my car paid off in March of next year. Once my car is paid off, I plan to combine the money saved by not having a car payment with the Money 2000 funds to help make the down payment on a condo. I'm making respectable monthly payments on my current credit cards and hope to have those paid off in about a year. As far as traveling, I am fortunate to have a modest training allowance provided through my employer and I'm able to combine travel with education -- such as my trip here to Washington, DC.

My future retirement plans include continued participation in the Money 2000 program. I would also

maintain the three tax sheltered annuities I currently have, as well as the retirement plan (IPERS) through my employer. I have a small amount in a money market account and I've joined an investment club. I know there are plans to save Social Security, and I certainly respect and applaud those efforts. However, if all else fails, and there is no Social Security in 15 years when I'm ready to retire, then I can be comfortable knowing that sound preparations are in place for the stability of my financial future.